



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT CAUTIONS RESIDENTS ABOUT DANGERS OF ALTERNATIVE HEATING EQUIPMENT

(Greenville SC) With dangerous wind chills and below average temperatures in the forecast, the Greenville City Fire Department (GCFD) is warning residents about the potential dangers of home heating equipment such as wood stoves and space heaters. This month alone, families in two city neighborhoods have been victims of residential fires caused by alternative heating sources.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), research shows that heating equipment is involved in more than 62,550 reported U.S. home structure fires per year, with associated loss of more than 516 civilian deaths, more than 1,595 civilian injuries and roughly \$924 million in direct property damage per year. "While these numbers are frightening, nearly all of these fires are preventable," said Will Broschious, community risk reduction coordinator for GCFD. "We can reduce the number of home heating fires in our community just by taking some simple precautions and using heating equipment properly."

As a result, GCFD is encouraging residents using pellet stoves, wood stoves, space heaters or any other home heating equipment to follow this advice:

- Space heaters need space. Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- Have your chimney inspected each year by a qualified professional and cleaned if necessary.
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen.
- Wood stoves should bear the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- In wood stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For the best protection interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home — when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- When using a fuel-burning portable heater, always use the proper fuel as specified by the manufacturer. When refueling, allow the appliance to cool and refuel outside.
- Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- **Never use an oven to heat your home.**

In addition to following the tips above, residents are urged to check on friends, neighbors and the elderly, who may be vulnerable to fire-related tragedy. For more information about fire safety, contact Will Broschious at 467-5753 (o), 631-4316 (c) or wbroscious@greenvillesc.gov.

#